

MUSIC

Caruso's Early Days Here Not Attended by Furore

Calm Review of Great Tenor's Career Refutes Much Remarkable History That Has Been Recently Manufactured and Disseminated.

By W. J. HENDERSON.

FOLLOWING the concert of last Sunday in memory of Enrico Caruso those who place a true value on the services of the famous singer may be allowed to review calmly some of the incidents of his career. Just after his death much remarkable history was manufactured and disseminated through the public prints. Men had vivid recollections of his early days on the local stage. Their memories supplied them with brilliant pages of misinformation, and newspaper columns were filled with pictures of a Caruso that never was. For instance, stress was laid on the fact that "he always designed his own costumes."

Mr. Caruso made his debut here in the consulship of Heinrich Conried, who knew very little about opera, but who was an experienced theatrical manager and a trained actor. Conried may or may not have perceived that in the new tenor he had a singer of unusual quality, but he saw at once that Mr. Caruso had not the vaguest notions of stage dress.

When the great tenor revealed himself to New York he wore clothes that did not fit him; that were made of very poor materials; that had neither style nor distinction. He looked like a star just drawn from a "barnstorming" company. The poverty of his dress was accentuated by his very bad acting. He was indescribably awkward. His walk was that of a peasant. His gestures lacked both direction and purpose. His poses were invariably ungraceful.

Told Importance of Costume.

The writer of these lines would like to rehearse some of his conversations with Mr. Conried, but unfortunately that shrewd showman imposed upon him the pledge of confidence. But there is no betrayal of good faith in the statement that the impresario's first labors with the great tenor were directed to impressing upon him the importance of costume and deportment on the stage.

In his early seasons here Mr. Caruso sometimes made astonishing excursions into the realm of the picturesque in dress, but in the course of time he developed a clear view of the proprieties. But Caruso's improvement was he was never able to achieve delicacy or subtlety in garb. Headgear seemed always to be a puzzle to him and some of his hats were indeed fearfully and wonderfully mad. Of course, his Duster Brown wig and white kid gloves in "Faust" will go down in history, but the "Cavalleria" and "Cavalleria Rusticana" should not be forgotten. However, when he sang "Cielo e mar" in "Gloconda" one cared not a whit what he wore. His delivery of that aria was the high water mark of his vocal art. It was one of the supreme pieces of singing of our time.

Mr. Conried never succeeded in eliminating all of the crudeness from Mr. Caruso's action. He dearly loved to play the clown and unfortunately many persons in audiences encouraged him in doing it. His undignified antics when before the curtain often obliterated the whole effect of some of his finest vocal achievements. Nor could he easily assume the stage of the urbanity of the courtesier or the nobility of a knightly character. His *Rosol* in "Les Huguenots" was distinctly bourgeois. His *Chevalier des Grieux* never ceased to suggest the son of a merchant prince.

Probably one can find here a reason why his greatest successes were in roles as *Carlo*, *Memmo*, and *Don Giovanni*. Even in his last years, when he rose to truly tragic heights as *Eleazar* and *John of Leyden*, he was still freed from the demands of aristocratic bearing and movement. *Eleazar* was an artisan and *John of Leyden* a publican.

About Mr. Caruso's invasion of the realm of heroic roles much has been written either through want of experience in the consideration of operatic progress or under the spell of popular enthusiasm. The artist cannot remain stationary. He must go forward or backward. True, the public doggedly opposes progress. It strove to imprison Jefferson in the rags of *Rip Van Winkle*, Booth in the brown of *Hamlet*, and the fringe of *Carmen* and Jean de Reszke in the doublet and hose of *Romeo*. Likewise, it endeavored to restrict Caruso to the bass drum of *Carmen* and the hysteria of *Rhadames*.

Could Not Stand Still.

Jean de Reszke demonstrated the power of the artist to create for himself a new style and to conquer new kingdoms when he began to sing *Tristan* and the two *Siegfrieds*. It was imperatively necessary for him to go somewhere; he could not stand still. He wisely sought a new field in which the roots of his art could strike deeper, which his fruits could be richer. How earnestly he pondered the matter might be disclosed by the publication of correspondence between him and the writer as to the advisability of his singing *Tristan*. But although permission to quote from the letters has lately been received, the time is not yet ripe for such lifting of the veil of the confidence communications of a long and cherished friendship.

Return we rather to Mr. Caruso, whose advance into the mysticisms of "Le Prophète" and "La Juive" was made chiefly because of his realization that new roles were essential to his artistic vitality. It was at the moment when he first felt the overwhelming force of this conviction that he began the deliberate modification of his vocal style which resulted in a pronounced change in the character of his voice. Mr. Caruso was a lyric singer when he first delighted New York audiences. In his last days he had almost obliterated all traces of lyric quality.

The individuality of the voice, however, was never lost. Nor did the famous tenor ever lose any of his extraordinary breath control, which gave to his singing from its earliest days to its latest a certain noble staidity and in sustained passages a feeling of enormous reserved power.

Did Not Create a Furore.

It would doubtless interest many to read some discussion of Mr. Caruso's different impersonations and the changes he made in them from time to

time, and probably there will yet be opportunities for this. But at this moment it might be more instructive to recall the now forgotten fact that the distinguished tenor did not create a furore when he was first heard here, nor was his name sufficient to crowd the opera house.

On the night before "Parsifal" was first performed in this country, specifically on December 23, 1903, "La Traviata" was sung in the Metropolitan Opera House with Mme. Sembrich as *Violetta*, Mr. Scotti as *Gertrude* and Mr. Caruso as *Alfredo*. The record made by this writer the next morning was under the headline, "Verdi's opera heard by a small and apathetic audience." Also it was recorded that Mr. Caruso "sang his music beautifully and succeeded in evoking warm applause, which was hard to get last night."

Truly the world does move. Then "La Traviata" was sung by three of the most consummate artists the operatic stage has ever known. It was heard almost in silence by a meagre audience. Last season the same work was received at the Manhattan by shouting multitudes when Mme. Galli-Curci placidly catalogued the woes of *Violetta* and the other members of the cast were merely entities or nonentities.

Left to Future Historians.

Much more could be written about the career of Mr. Caruso, about his personality, about his art, about his courage in facing the opposition of his compatriots to his incursion into French classic and modern operas, and about his voice. But future historians of opera will not be confronted with the insurmountable obstacles which most men find when they wish to speak of audience. Last season the same work was received at the Manhattan by shouting multitudes when Mme. Galli-Curci placidly catalogued the woes of *Violetta* and the other members of the cast were merely entities or nonentities.

"Ernani" to Be Revived at the Metropolitan

Verdi's "Ernani," which has not been heard in the Metropolitan Opera House since 1903, will be revived by General Manager Gatti-Casazza next Thursday evening. Mr. Marinelli will sing the title role and Titta Ruffo, who will appear for the first time with the company, will sing the role of Don Carlos. Mme. Rosa Ponselle will have the role of Elvira. The opera will be conducted by Mr. Marinelli. The opera will be conducted by Mr. Marinelli.

Opera at Metropolitan

MONDAY. "The Dead City," with Mme. Jeritza, Messrs. Harold, Diaz and Laurin.
WEDNESDAY. "Mefistofele," with Mme. Easton and Peralta, Messrs. Gligli and Didur.
THURSDAY. "Ernani," with Miss Ponselle, Messrs. Marinelli and Titta Ruffo (his first appearance with the company).
FRIDAY. "Matinee—Parsifal," with Mme. Matzenauer, Messrs. Sembrich, Whitehill and Didur. Evening—"Boris Godunov," with Mme. Gordon, Messrs. Harold and Chailin (for the first time in America in the title role).
SATURDAY. "Matinee—"Tosca," with Miss Farrar, Messrs. Marinelli and Scotti.



MISS PHOEBE JEFFERSON IN DEBUT RECITAL AEOLIAN HALL

MRS. CECILIA GUIDER SINGING AT CARNEGIE HALL

FEODOR CHALIAPIN AS BORIS AT THE METROPOLITAN

Important Benefit Concerts to Mark Music of the Week

Richard Strauss to Appear With a Symphony Orchestra at Hippodrome for Aid of European Child Feeding Stations.

The concert of this week is to be marked by several important benefits. Richard Strauss and a symphony orchestra will give a concert for the benefit of the Central European Child Feeding Stations at the Hippodrome this evening. Mme. Ely Ney will be the soloist. She will play the solo part in Mr. Strauss' "Burlesque" for piano and orchestra—a work rarely heard in our concert halls. The programme is full—a Strauss-Wagner one—follows: "Don Juan," "Turlerle" for piano and orchestra; "Tod und Verklärung," Strauss; preludes to "Lohengrin" and "Die Meistersinger," Wagner.

The programmes for the week of the New York Symphony Orchestra are: This afternoon, in Aeolian Hall, Mozart, Symphony No. 3, E flat, piano concerto, A. Harold Bauer, soloist; Fowell, overture to "The Marriage of Figaro," new here; "Leken, adagio for strings; Franck, "Die Djinns"; Thursday afternoon and Friday evening, at Carnegie Hall, music by Wagner, scene 1 and finale from "Rhinogold," with the following soloists: Miss Adele Parkhurst, soprano; Miss Frieda Klink, contralto; David, tenor; and Fred Patton, bass; from "The Valkyrie," Wotan's Farewell and Fire Chorus; Mr. Patton singing the music of Wagner, scene 1 and finale from "Rhinogold," with the following soloists: Miss Adele Parkhurst, soprano; Miss Frieda Klink, contralto; David, tenor; and Fred Patton, bass; from "The Valkyrie," Wotan's Farewell and Fire Chorus; Mr. Patton singing the music of Wagner, scene 1 and finale from "Rhinogold," with the following soloists: Miss Adele Parkhurst, soprano; Miss Frieda Klink, contralto; David, tenor; and Fred Patton, bass; from "The Valkyrie," Wotan's Farewell and Fire Chorus; Mr. Patton singing the music of Wagner, scene 1 and finale from "Rhinogold," with the following soloists: Miss Adele Parkhurst, soprano; 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